

ADmits INTERVIEWS

TV Newsman Denies Connection with Novel

By DUANE ST. CLAIR
Of The Dispatch Staff

TV newsman and outdoor columnist Richard L. Paugh said reports that the controversial Gordon Novel dealt with Paugh's part-time Gahanna news operation were "hokum."

Paugh confirmed Saturday that he had interviewed Novel nearly two weeks ago and that he had a telephone conversation with the former New Orleans night club operator "about a week ago."

NOVEL IS wanted in New Orleans for questioning in an investigation into President Kennedy's assassination.



Paugh

Paugh, who writes a column for the weekly Spectator, denied that through his business, Maverick News Service, 74 Mill St., Gahanna, he had dealings with Novel.

Gahanna officials theorized Novel may have been living in the office which Paugh visits "two or three afternoons a week."

PAUGH SAID that if "any strangers" were around the building, he would know about it.

Paugh doubted anyone was living in the building which has two other businesses—the Rocky Fork Enterprise weekly newspaper and a PTA "trading post" — because there are no apparent living quarters and only one toilet in the building. He was uncertain of the building owner's name.

A WTVN-TV newsman,

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PAUGH

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Paugh said that he interviewed Novel after locating him in a Downtown hotel. He located Novel, he said, after a national television network said Novel was in Columbus.

PAUGH described Novel as "a kinda erratic fella" who made no definite statements in the telephone conversation. It was a Columbus area call, he said.

"I didn't really know why he called," Paugh said. At the time, Paugh said, "He told me he had been to Virginia and had come back again."

He admitted, however, that Novel had inquired about selling a news story about his experiences.

PAUGH DENIED that he offered to market the story and suggested Novel contact various magazines. Paugh said Novel "didn't seem anxious to come out with facts."

Novel, he related, inquired if any money could be made selling a story, and Paugh assured him there could be.

When asked about reports that he, Paugh, had agreed to buy or market a story and that Novel was writing it in the news service office, Paugh commented, "That's interesting."

HE LATER said that the reports were "not right."

Paugh said his only recent knowledge of Novel was information that he had been arrested in Gahanna Saturday afternoon.